

Old Colony Planning Council – Area Agency on Aging

FY 2005 Provider Agency Elder Service Needs Survey

OVERVIEW:

As the Area Agency on Aging for the local region, the Old Colony Planning Council – Area Agency on Aging (OCPC-AAA) is charged with the responsibility of helping to identify and address the needs of elders from throughout our region. As part of our ongoing effort to identify and address the greatest unmet or inadequately met needs of elders in our 23-community region in SE Massachusetts, the OCPC-AAA recently conducted a survey of provider agencies and individuals from throughout the region. The purpose of the provider survey was to collect information from agencies and individuals who have regular contact and interaction with people over the age of 60, and who have direct, day-to-day experience in assisting elders. The perspective gleaned from direct service staff that have regular contact and interaction provides a unique perspective, a valuable source of information for the entire elder service network, and helps to establish service priority areas for Older Americans Act (OAA) funding for the region.

The information and feedback gained from the survey will be used in conjunction with other information (Older Americans Act requirements, statewide elder needs assessment, past programming, statewide initiatives and trends) to establish service priority areas for the OCPC-AAA. These priority service areas help the OCPC-AAA to direct OAA funding to the greatest needs in the region.

METHODOLOGY:

The OCPC-AAA selected various provider agencies and individuals to be surveyed. This selection process was based on OCPC-AAA's knowledge of and experience with the elder service network in the region. This is by no means an exclusive and exhaustive listing of provider agencies in the region.

OCPC-AAA identified the following as agencies to be surveyed for the project:

- Old Colony Elderly Services (1)
- Councils on Aging/Senior Centers (24)
- OCPC-AAA Region VNA's (7)
- Housing Authorities (14)
- Title III Providers (15)
- "Others" (Brockton Mayor's Office, BAMSI-HELPLINE, MA Department of Mental Health, Alzheimer's Association, Brockton Hospital, Caritas Good Samaritan Hospital, Jordan Hospital, Southcoast Hospital, VA Medical Center – Brockton Campus, Brockton Neighborhood Health Center, Massasoit Senior Center, and Brockton Salvation Army (12).

A total of 73 surveys were sent out. Agencies were not limited to one response per agency, but were encouraged to distribute the survey tool to as many appropriate staff as possible.

This was a mailed survey process. Recipients were sent a cover letter explaining the purpose of the survey, and a one page survey to complete. Surveys were mailed out on December 17, 2004. Recipients were asked to return the survey by January 15, 2005. The survey included a postage-paid return envelope. The survey consisted of a listing of 27 different services or service categories. Respondents were instructed as follows:

“(prioritize) the ten most needed and unmet or inadequately met service areas facing the elders (and their caregivers) that you have served over the past 12 to 15 months. Please rank only ten specific service categories. (1=most needed and unmet, 10=least needed and unmet).”

To tabulate the results, we reversed the ranking for any given service category and assigned the appropriate score. For example, a ranking of 1 (most needed) was equal to 10 points, a ranking of 2 was equal to 9 points, a ranking of 3 was equal to 8 points, etc. We summed up the total scores to come up with the ranking from highest to lowest score.

This survey process and the resulting findings are simply a descriptive analysis of the perspective and experiences of the respondent. The results reflect the respondents own interpretation and understanding of the greatest unmet needs of the elders they have served.

RESULTS:

A total of 73 agencies were surveyed, 33 agencies responded for a return rate of 45%. No follow-up inquiries were made to those agencies that did not respond. A total of 67 different individuals from the 33 agencies responded. There were 26 individuals that responded from Old Colony Elderly Services. Of the 24 COA's/Senior Centers in the region, 19 responded. Of the 14 Housing Authority Offices surveyed, 5 responded. Of the 14 Title III provider agencies, 7 responded. Of the 7 VNA's surveyed, 2 responded. Of the 12 "other" agencies, 7 responded.

The Table below reflects the final rankings of the service categories listed on the survey tool. Table #2 reflects the actual scores by category.

FY 2005 Elder Services Provider Needs Assessment
 Old Colony Planning Council-Area Agency on Aging

Service Category:	Score:	Ranking of Greatest Need:
Transportation	411	1
Affordable Housing	287	2
Financial Assistance	268	3
Personal Care	231	4
Homemaker	196	5
Mental Health Care	195	6
Home Repairs	179	7
Outreach	176	8
Friendly Visiting	175	9
Information and Assistance	172	10
Chore Service	148	11
Shopping	138	12
Adult Day Programs	134	13
Case Management	129	14
Legal Assistance	128	15
Bill Paying Service	101	16
Home Delivered Meals	98	17
Home Modification	98	18
Protective Services	54	19
Recreation	50	20
Nutrition Education	50	21
Health Education/Screening	49	22
Employment Opportunities	42	23
Other	35	24
Exercise	25	25
Roommate Matching	24	26
Telephone Reassurance	19	27
Letter Writing	10	28

Detail of Results:

- The highest possible score that any possible service category could receive would be 670 (if every respondent ranked the same service category as 1, this would equal 10 points for that service. If every respondent ranked the same category as #1 the maximum total of points would equal 670).
- Transportation – 57 of the 68 respondents reported this as one of the ten greatest unmet needs. Of these 57 respondents, 20 ranked this service as the number one unmet need (score of 10). Of the 57 respondents, 34 ranked this service as one of the top three unmet needs.
- Affordable Housing – 44 of the 68 respondents reported this as one of the ten greatest unmet needs. Of these 44 respondents, 12 ranked this category as the number one unmet need (score of 10). Of the 44 respondents, 21 ranked this category as one of the top three unmet needs.
- Financial Assistance – 43 of the 68 respondents reported this as one of the ten greatest unmet needs. Of these 43 respondents, 5 ranked this category as the number one unmet need (score of 10). Of the 43 respondents, 21 ranked this category as one of the top three unmet needs.

If you have any questions, or would like to discuss the results of this survey in greater detail, please feel free to contact Patrick Hamilton at (508) 583-1833.